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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an analysis of the manual and non-manual pronouns identified in Mexican Sign Language (MSL) used by a female speaker in 1993, discusses syntactic uses of each type, and examines pronoun deletion. MSL has two distinct modes of expressing pronominal relationships: manual pronouns (including indexical, incorporated, classifiers, initialized, and possessives) and non-manual pronouns, such as linguistically significant eye-gazes and body shifts. But the study of pronominal usage in MSL must also include the sociolinguistic situation of the language, especially considering the widespread bilingualism of its users. With respect to pronouns, the pervasiveness of Spanish in the daily lives of MSL users shows itself primarily in the relexification of some Spanish pronominals into the MSL system, resulting in syntactic variability. The study of pronouns in MSL is thus fruitful not only for the linguistic phenomena that it illustrates and its bearing on cross-linguistic pronominal representations in sign languages, but also for the sociolinguistic insights it provides into the life of the Mexican deaf. (Contains seven references.) (NAV)

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# Pronouns in Mexican Sign Language

Marilyn Plumlee

*Pronouns in Mexican Sign Language (MSL) can be divided into two distinct classes: the manual pronouns, formed by configurations and movements of the hand, and the non-manual pronouns, formed by means of eye movements and body shifts which carry linguistic content. Within each class, several types of pronouns are found. This paper discusses the morphology of various types within each class and provides examples which illustrate their use in MSL discourse.*

*MSL speakers constitute a linguistic minority who are in frequent contact with a majority group using Spanish, the language of higher prestige in the society at large. An additional focus of this paper is thus the identification of the morphological and syntactic features of MSL pronouns which have resulted from extensive contact with the Spanish language.*

ED 385 152

## 1. Introduction

Mexican Sign Language (MSL) has two distinct modes of expressing pronominal relationships. There are, first of all, the manual pronouns, i.e. actual signs formed by configurations and movements of the hand; secondly, there are the non-manual pronouns, formed by means of linguistically significant eye gazes and body shifts. The manual pronouns, for the most part, are easily distinguished morphemes. The linguistic analysis of the non-manuals, however, is not so easily accomplished. Fluent signers are themselves most often not consciously aware that they use non-manual pronouns extensively. Indeed, it was only after linguists had devoted extensive research efforts to the topic that non-manual markers were identified as a form of pronominalization in American Sign Language (Friedman 1975, Liddell 1978, Liddell 1980, Baker and Padden 1978).

This paper provides a brief sketch of the manual and non-manual pronouns identified in MSL and discusses some of the syntactic uses of each type. The frequently occurring phenomenon of pronoun deletion is also illustrated and discussed.

A study of pronominal usage in MSL cannot remain isolated from the sociolinguistic situation of the language, however. The relevant factor is the continuum of bilingualism among MSL speakers, ranging from nearly total monolingual MSL use to nearly total bilingualism in Spanish, the prestige spoken language of the wider community (Eatough 1992, Faurot et al. 1992:6-10). With respect to pronouns, the pervasiveness of the Spanish language in the daily lives of MSL users manifests itself primarily in the relexification of some Spanish pronominals into the MSL system, which in turn results in syntactic variability.

The study of pronouns in MSL is thus fruitful not only for the linguistic phenomena which it illustrates and its bearing on cross-linguistic pronominal representations in signed languages, but also for the insights it provides into the sociolinguistic situation among the Mexican deaf.

The language associate who provided the data used as examples in this paper was Lilia Laura Herros de Alcántara of Mexico City, a fluent bilingual in MSL and Spanish. The data was collected in the summer of 1993.

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## 2. Morphology of Pronouns.

The classification of pronouns into manual and non-manual can be further subdivided.

### *2.1 Manual pronouns.*

Five morphological types of manual signs are documented, and each is discussed in turn: indexical pronouns, incorporated pronouns, classifiers, initialized pronouns, and possessive pronouns.

#### *2.1.1 Indexical Pronouns.*

Indexical pronouns indicate the referent by means of pointing, usually with the index finger for singular referents, or by a combination of fingers for plural referents. Data obtained provides clear documentation of manual indexical pronouns to refer to 1sg, 2sg, 3sg, 3dl and 3pl. We now look at examples of each.

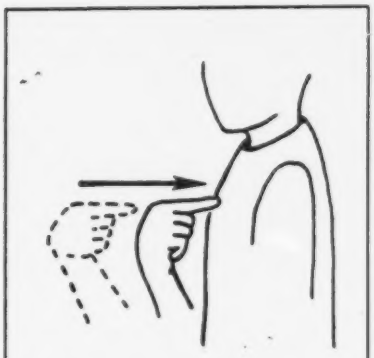

**Figure 1: INDEX-1**

The INDEX-1 pronoun (see Figure 1), which is formed by the index finger touching the speaker's chest, is used primarily[1] to represent a 1sg subject, as in example (1):

(1) INDEX-1 ESTAR MAS CONTENTO
1sg to be more happy
*'I am very happy.'*[2]

A variant of INDEX-1 is INDEX-1b, in which two or more fingers touch the speaker's chest. This was observed in casual speech, as illustrated in (2):

(2) INDEX-1b OCCUPADO NO-PODER IR-3 NADAR
1sg busy can't go swimming
*'I'm busy and can't go swimming.'*

INDEX-2 (see Figure 2), which is formed with the index finger pointing at the interlocutor, is used most frequently to represent a 2sg subject, as illustrated in (3):

(3) INDEX-2 NO BIEN TOCAR
2sg not well push
*'You didn't push hard enough.'*

---

[1] It may also be used to indicate a possessor, as discussed below in connection with example (8).

[2] It was decided to gloss the examples which illustrate the structure of MSL with Spanish words accompanied by an English translation of the gloss, followed by an English free translation of the meaning of the sentence. The decision to use Spanish for the glosses was motivated by two factors: (1) the examples would thus be accessible to both Spanish and English speakers, particularly to deaf people who can read Spanish; and (2) the influence of the Spanish language on MSL would be more transparent, particularly with respect to initialization of signs.

Fingerspelled words are indicated by dashes between the letters: "M-A-Y-O".

[3] Even when directional verbs are used in the imperative, the pronominal arguments remain visible, as the following example illustrates:

INDEX-3 is executed by pointing with the index finger to an actual or assigned location of the third person referent. When used to represent an absent singular referent, it differs syntactically from INDEX-1 and INDEX-2 in that for INDEX-3, normally the referent must first be identified, then referred to anaphorically by the indexical pronoun, as example (4) illustrates:

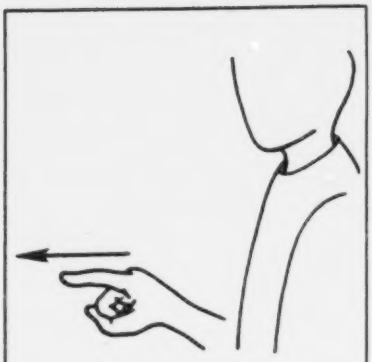

**Figure 2: INDEX-2**

(4) PADRE INDEX-3 RESPONSABLE
father 3sg responsible
*'The father is responsible.'*

When the 3sg referent is physically present, INDEX-3 can be used as INDEX-1 and INDEX-2, i.e. without naming the referent, as the pointing would sufficiently identify the referent. However, examples of cataphoric pronominalization have also been noted, as in (5), where INDEX-3 precedes the identification of the referent. Whether used in anaphoric or cataphoric pronominalization, INDEX-3 representing an absent referent requires that that referent be identified.

(5) INDEX-3 INDEX-1 COMPAÑERO INDEX-1 INDEX-3
3sg lsg friend lsg 3sg

INDEX-1 MUCHO AMIGO COMPAÑERO
lsg very much friend good friend

2hds-CL:child:rising 2hds-CL:child:rising
2-grow-up-together 2-grow-up-together

ACORDARSE COMPAÑERO.
remember friend

*'My friend and I, my very good friend, we grew up together, we were kids together, I remember (that) friend.'*

Indexicalization to represent a 3pl pronoun has been observed in three different forms. The first is labeled INDEX-3-arc, and is formed by means of the index finger tracing the shape of a horizontal semicircle in the neutral signing space, accompanied by an eye gaze focused just beyond the circumference of the circle traced in the air, as illustrated in (6):

(6) DEPENDER INDEX-3-arc PERSONAS GUSTAR
depends 3pl people like/please
*'It depends on what people like.'*

The second form of the 3pl pronoun is labeled INDEX-3-many. This is executed by the signer pointing to several consecutive locations along an imaginary horizontal arc in the neutral signing space, as illustrated in (7):

(7) UNOS SORDOS ... CLARO PARA INDEX-3-many // PORQUE
some deaf ... clear for 3pl // because

INDEX-3 TODAVIA NO D-D ... PODER EQUIVOCARSE
3pl not-yet not ? ... able make-a-mistake
*'[You have to sign] clearly for some deaf, because they don't always get it (?) and could misunderstand.'*

The third form, INDEX-3, reiterating a previously specified 3pl referent, as in example (7), above, is identical in form to INDEX-3 referring to a 3sg referent. In this context, it appears appropriate to translate INDEX-3 as 'they', rather than 'he' or 'she'.

In addition to the uses illustrated above, indexical pronouns have also been observed to signify the possessive. Example (8), below, illustrates INDEX-1 used for the 1sg possessive pronoun:

(8) INDEX-1 HERMANA TOCAR ESPERAR-ESPERAR
1sg sister ring the bell wait
*'My sister buzzed [again], and we waited.'*

INDEX-2 and INDEX-1b have also been observed in possessive usage corresponding to that of INDEX-1.

Based on pronominal usage in a related language, American Sign Language (ASL), one might expect to find indexical pronouns for the dual and for the plural with specific numbers of referents. However, only meager data has been obtained to confirm the existence of indexical duals, and no evidence at all has been found for indexical plurals referring to specific numbers in MSL.

Examples of indexical 3dl were found in the following utterance:

(9) PERO J M NO MAS CONTENTO POQUITO CONTENTO
but Josue Miryam not more happy little happy

PORQUE 3dl CANSADO CONDUCIR // 3dl
because those-2 tired drive those-2

DECIR CANSADO SENTARSE CONDUCIR neg + chin
say drive sit drive not good

*'Josué and Miryam are not really thrilled about the trip, because they say it will be tiring to sit still for so long during the drive.'*

Here the 3dl was formed by making a palm-up 'V' with the fingers pointing to the right to indicate third person and signed with a slight shaking movement.

An example of a construction where indexical plurals would be expected in ASL, but where they were not found in MSL, is given in (10):

(10) intns PROXIMO MARTES intns M M
intns next Tuesday intns Marilyn, Miguel,

S B ... IR-3 ... EXAMEN
Shelley Bev go test

*'Wow, next Tuesday Marilyn, Mike, Shelley, and Bev will be taking a test.'*

In ASL, it is very likely that either the 3pl or the INDEX-3 for four specified people would have been used as a resumptive pronoun after the list of names.

The lack of attested indexical representation of specific numbers of plural referents in this study's corpus, which contrasts sharply with their frequent occurrence in ASL, leads to the tentative conclusion that they do not exist in MSL, but a larger corpus of data might reveal their presence.

*2.1.2 Incorporated pronouns*

Pronouns are frequently incorporated as the subject and object of the class of verbs which includes DECIR 'tell, answer', MIRAR 'look at', PREGUNTAR 'ask', and DAR 'give'. The

pronouns are not overtly signed as separate morphemes, but the direction of the movement of the verb to or from the actual or assigned location of the referent signals their presence. They are therefore classified with the manual pronouns, since they are rendered through manual movement and configuration. This class of verbs is known in sign language linguistics as directional verbs, because of the obligatory incorporation of the locations of the arguments into the movement associated with their production.[3] Example (11) illustrates 1sg subject and 2sg object pronouns incorporated into a directional verb:

(11) PASADO APENAS 1sg-DECIR-2sg AYER
before just-finish I-tell-you yesterday
*'What did I tell you yesterday?'*

*2.1.3 Classifiers*

Classifiers, formed by handshapes representing specific classes of nouns, are a unique type of pronoun in MSL. Cross-linguistically, they are a typical feature of sign languages, and they constitute one of the primary markers of native signer discourse. Many of the MSL classifiers are identical with those of ASL, or nearly so. In the data collected for this study, three types of classifiers have been noted: persons, objects and shapes, and moving vehicles. When referring to persons and objects, classifiers always occur after the referent has been specified. Further data must be collected to verify whether the noun must precede the introduction of the classifier when referring to moving vehicles.

Classifiers may be inflected in a number of ways, as the classifier representing a human in a seated position (CL:seated) in example (12) illustrates.

(12) move from lt move from rt eye gz rt
CL:seated-lt CL:seated-rt CONDUCIR OTRO TIENDA
climb in the car climb in the car drive other store
*'So they both got in the car, and we drove to another store.'*

Classifiers may change word class from noun to verb, as example (5), repeated below for convenience, illustrates. The noun classifier 'child' is used as a verb meaning 'to grow up', and is simultaneously inflected for the plurality of the subject (see Figure 3):

(13) INDEX-3 INDEX-1 COMPAÑERO INDEX-1 INDEX-3
3sg lsg friend lsg 3sg

INDEX-1 MUCHO AMIGO COMPAÑERO
lsg very much friend good friend

2hds-CL:child:rising 2hds-CL:child:rising
2-grow-up-together 2-grow-up-together

ACORDARSE COMPAÑERO
remember friend

*'My friend and I, my very good friend, we grew up together, we were kids together, I remember (that) friend.'*

Interestingly, the classifier CL:child, which behaves as a prototypical sign in its inflections, is, in fact, a relexification of a gesture widely used in hearing society in Mexico to symbolize children: the curved finger placed at various heights is used adjectively to signify the age and size of a child. When used by hearing Mexicans, however, the gesture cannot be inflected as a verb, nor can it be marked for number, as it is here in its relexified form in MSL.

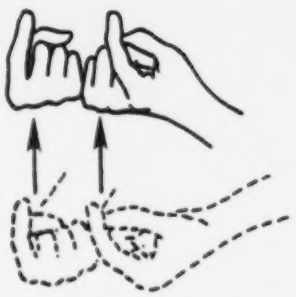

**Figure 3: Classifier 'child' used as a verb 'to grow up'**

A list of classifiers recorded is found in Appendix II.

*2.1.4 Initialized*

The fourth category of pronouns, initialized pronouns, originates in the written form of Spanish and is thus the category which exhibits the highest degree of influence from Spanish, both morphologically and syntactically. The initialized pronouns recorded in our data are the following:

**Table 1: Initialized pronouns**

| Sign gloss | Spanish gloss | English gloss |
|---|---|---|
| e | ME | 'me' |
| i | MI | 'me, my' |
| n | NUESTRO, NOSOTROS | 'we, our' |
| u | USTEDES | 'you (pl.)' |
| y | YO | 'I' |

Examples of usage for each of these pronouns follows. According to both Karla Faurot (personal communication) and Guzmán and Miranda 1987, "u" to represent Spanish USTED '2sg-formal' is also used, but our data sample does not contain any examples of this, undoubtedly due to the informal register in which the data was obtained. Example (14) illustrates "e" as a direct object and (15) illustrates "e" as a reflexive, following Spanish syntax in both cases:

(14) e COGER MARILYN
me take Marilyn
*'Marilyn picked me up.'*[4]

(15) NO e ACORDAR
not me remember
*'I don't remember.'*

Example (16) illustrates the use of "i" to express the Spanish 1sg possessive 'MI':

(16) i PAPA ESTAR IN MEXICO
my father is in Mexico
*'My father is in Mexico.'*

[4] In MSL, tense is not commonly marked on the verb. In this case, the past tense is inferred from the previous utterance.

The 1sg object of the preposition 'MI', also expressed as "i", is found in constructions such as those illustrated in (17):

(17) PARA i e GUSTAR
for me to-me pleasing
*'I like it.'*

Example (17) also provides another example of the use of 1sg "e" as the object in Spanish syntax.

In general, it can be said that the use of "i" and "e" in MSL indicate influence from the syntax of the surrounding written language environment. The two signs are executed as a kind of contraction of the fingerspelled Spanish words MI 'me, my' and ME 'me' on the chest (the usual location for deictic representation of the first person). In our data, no examples of 2sg or 3sg initialized pronouns were obtained. Due to the formation of the first person pronoun on a base which supports the meaning (the signer's chest), and given the physical impracticality of similarly forming the second and third person signs, such signs would be highly improbable. More likely is that an indexical pronoun would be used if the signer wanted to overtly express the second or third person. Eatough (1992:23) claims categorically that 'there are no initialized third person pronouns', but states that fingerspelled TU 'you, your', oriented toward the addressee, is a possibility, albeit rarely used.

Examples of initialized "n" NUESTRO 'our', NOSOTROS 'we', as well as initialized "u" USTEDES 'you pl' and "y" YO 'I' were also recorded.

*2.1.5 Possessive pronouns*

Possessive pronouns have been recorded for 1sg, 2sg, and 3sg. Plural possessives have not been observed. The possessive pronoun is formed with a p-handshape, then signed in the appropriate location to indicate the possessor, i.e. tapping on the signer's chest for MI 'my' or MIO 'mine', shaking in the extended signing space between two interlocutors for TU 'your' or TUYO 'yours' (see Figure 4), and shaking off-center in the extended signing space for SU and SUYO 'his, her, hers'. Examples (18)–(20) illustrate the use of the possessive pronouns in the singular:

**Figure 4: POSS-2**

(18) TODO ES POSS-1
all is 1sg.POSS
*'All that is mine.'*

(19) DONDE ESTAR POSS-2 LLAVE
where to-be-located 2sg.POSS key
*'Where are your keys?'*

(20) POSS-3 ESPOSO IRSE JUNTOS HOMBRE IRSE AYUDAR ALLÁ
(rt shd: IRSE JUNTOS; gz rt: HOMBRE IRSE; bs rt: AYUDAR ALLÁ)
3sg.POSS husband go together man go help-over-there
*'Her husband had gone out to help another man.'*

*2.2 Non-manual Pronouns*

In this section I will discuss pronominalization by means of eye gaze and body shift.

*2.2.1 Eye gaze*

The term eye gaze refers to a location assigned by means of a movement of the eyes to a pronominal referent after that person has been referred to in the narrative by an indexical pronoun. Eye gaze alone cannot establish the referent's location; it must either accompany the introduction of a nominal or indexical referent, or be preceded in the discourse by an indexical indication of the referent's location. Subsequent references to that location by means of eye gazes or manual references (such as indexical or incorporated pronouns on directional verbs) suppose the interlocutor's understanding that that location is reserved specifically for that referent.

For example, in (20), the first occurrence of the lexical item 'man' is accompanied by an eye gaze to the right, signified by the indication 'eye gz rt' on the line reserved for non-manual markers above the gloss line. This eye gaze, in conjunction with the lexical item 'HOMBRE', serves to assign that location to the designated 'man' in the subsequent discourse.

Example (6), repeated below for convenience, illustrates the use of eye gaze simultaneously accompanying an indexical reference: [5]

(21)
```
            eye gz rt
DEPENDER INDEX-3-arc PERSONA GUSTAR
depends  3pl        person  like/please
```
*'It depends on what people like.'*

In (22) mention is made of the nominal referent (the hearing aid), then its location is established by means of an eye gaze focused on the classifier (CL: small square thing), followed by eye gazes in subsequent references to indicate the hearing aids.

(22)
```
i  HIJO  TENER APARATO      // SER
my child have  hearing aid // be

MAS  IMPORTANTE PORQUE  SER DELICADO
more important  because be  delicate

eye gz at CL:          eye gz down   eye gz down
CL:small square thing MAS DELICADO  CAER
it                    more fragile  fall

                  eye gz interloc. eyebrow up
ROMPEAR ROMPEAR MAS DELICADO      //
break   break   it more fragile  //

           eye gz down
IMPORTANTE CUIDAR           MUCHO
important  take care of it  much
```

[5] The abbreviations above the data line (rt shd, gz rt, bs rt) refer to the non-manual features. An explanation of the abbreviations is found in the Abbreviations section of this paper.

eye gz interloc.; eye gz down
CUIDAR
take care of it

*'My children have hearing aids, and it is very important because they are very fragile, very fragile—they could fall and break; they are so fragile—it's important to be careful, very careful, with them.'*

*2.2.2 Body Shift*

Body shift is a commonly-used device in which the narrator assumes the person of another character in the narrative. Example (23), fully glossed with all of the non-manual markers, illustrates both the effective use of body shift pronominals and the richness and complexity of the non-manual features. The signer sets up the location of the teacher and the director, and then clearly conveys the message emanating from each by maintaining these locations.

(23)

| | | blnk, gz rt | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | gz rt | mouth grimace | | blnk, gz rt |
| eyes up | mouth open | tight lower lip | | blnk, gz inloc |
| CERCA | M-A-Y-O | SENTIR | ACERCAR | PROFESSOR |
| around | May | feel | go-to | teacher |

| gz rt, blnk | | lean rt | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DIRECTOR | PUES | PRUEBA | SI | PERMISO |
| director | for | see | if | permission |

| gz rt | sharp bs rt | hold bs, but |
|---|---|---|
| head tilt rt | lips taut | turn head lt |
| | SI (rt hand) | SI (lt hand) |
| there-at-school | yes | yes |

*'Around May, I thought [it was about time] to go see the teacher and director to ask for permission [for the children to be absent from school], and they both said yes.'*

When translated into English, body shift pronominalization is rendered by indirect discourse, e.g. 'They both said yes'. This contrasts with the MSL discourse in that the narrator makes two body shifts and thereby clearly assumes the roles of each of the characters, signalling that "Director says 'yes'; teacher says 'yes'".

*3.5 Deletion of Pronouns*

Deletion of pronouns (pro-drop) is quite frequent in MSL. It has been observed to occur not only in the imperative, a common cross-linguistic phenomenon, but also when the pronominal subject has been previously established. The subject of a sentence is understood to be the speaker unless otherwise specified, as example (23) 'CERCA M-A-Y-O SENTIR...' illustrates. Similar examples are found frequently in our recordings. Deletion of a third person pronoun is illustrated in the second sentence of example (24), occurring, as predicted, after the subject had been established in the first sentence.

(24) J QUERER GANAR UNA BOLSA PARA ESCUELA //
Josué want get a backpack for school //

BOLSA QUERER COMPRAR
backpack want buy

*'Josué wanted to get a backpack for school. He wanted to buy a backpack.'*

Cases of pro-drop without syntactic or morphological marking are not to be confused with incorporated subjects of directional verbs, where the verb morphology provides an explicit statement of subject and object.

Given that pro-drop is also a common phenomenon in ASL, it would be interesting to undertake a comparison of pro-drop phenomena across a variety of both spoken and signed languages to see what universal patterns are discernible.

## 4. Conclusion

This study has attempted to inventory the various types of pronouns used in Mexican Sign Language, separating them into two major classes: manual pronouns (including indexical, incorporated, classifiers, initialized, and possessives) and non-manual pronouns (eye gaze and body shift). Since pronoun deletion was also found to be a common phenomenon in MSL, utterances illustrating this were also discussed.

MSL pronouns constitute a relatively closed class of items yet give evidence of change due to frequent contact with spoken and written Spanish. They provide an excellent set of data with which to illustrate many of the characteristic features of Mexican Sign Language: iconicity of signs, physical constraints on sign formation, the prominent use of classifiers, the grammatical and semantic importance of body shifts and eye movements, and finally, syntactic variability and relexification due to language contact.

Having highlighted these features by means of this study of pronouns, it is hoped that the groundwork has been laid for subsequent investigation into these same features in other aspects of the language.

## Appendix I: Glossing Conventions

In cases where a gloss might be ambiguous in its representation of a sign, the following conventions were adopted for purposes of this paper:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| IR-SE | go-1 | two palms grazing |
| IR-v | go-2 | thumb and index indicating disappearance into the horizon |
| IR-VV | go-3 | two-handed V-shape rotating away from speaker |
| INDEX-1 | | using index finger pointing to self |
| INDEX-1b | | using two or more fingers to point to self |

## Appendix II: Attested MSL Manual Pronouns from Data Sample Used for This Study

1. Indexical pronouns

| | |
|---|---|
| INDEX-1 | '1sg' |
| INDEX-1b | '1sg' |
| INDEX-2 | '2sg' |
| INDEX-3dl | '3dl' |
| INDEX-3sg | '3sg' |
| INDEX-3dl | '3dl' |
| INDEX-3-arc | '3pl' |
| INDEX-3-many | '3pl' |

2. Incorporated pronouns

Arguments of directional verbs

3. Classifiers

Persons
- 'seated'
- 'sitting-in-a-group'
- 'walking upstairs'
- 'walking downstairs'
- 'sitting face-to-face'
- 'child-grow-up'

Objects/Shapes

| | |
|---|---|
| CL:o | 'small-round-object' |
| CL:B | 'wall, flat surface' |
| CL:index-Y | 'bed' |
| CL:Y | 'pitcher, pouring vessel' |

Vehicles

| | |
|---|---|
| CL:index-Y | 'car' |
| CL:L-Y | 'airplane' |

4. Initialized pronouns

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| e | ME | 'me' |
| i | MI | 'me, my' |
| n | NUESTRO, NOSOTROS | 'we, our' |
| u | USTEDES | 'your, pl.' |
| y | YO | 'I' |

5. Possessive pronouns

POSS possessive pronoun, marked for specific referent by localization, attested for 1sg, 2sg, 3sg

**Abbreviations**

| | |
|---|---|
| # | performance pause, signaling clause or sentence boundary |
| 1 | first person |
| 2 | second person |
| 3 | third person |
| blnk | blink |
| bs | body shift |
| dl | dual |
| gz | gaze non-manual marker |
| inloc | interlocutor |
| intns | intensifier |
| lt | left |
| loc | location, locative |
| many | an unspecified number of plural |
| neg | negative head shake non-manual marker |
| pl | plural |
| poss | possessive |
| pn | pronoun |
| q | question non-manual marker |
| rt | right |

sg singular
sh shoulder, i.e. sign executed off the shoulder, as opposed to being executed in neutral signing space

**References**

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